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Soviet Difficulties in the Ukraine

By Michael Pap

175 THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN controversy over the status of the Ukraine[1] dates as far back as 1654. In that year, Bohdan Khmelnitzkyj, Hetman of Ukraine, taking into account the constant dangers of Polish and Tartar aggressions, concluded a mutual assistance treaty, called "Perejaslavka Uhoda," with the Moscovite Tsar Alexej. The treaty provided for stationing a small military detachment of Tsarist forces in the Ukraine. The Russian Tsar pledged to respect the sovereignty of the Ukraine by not interfering in the internal, political and social life of the country. However, after the occupation of strategic military bases, these solemn vows were gradually ignored and forgotten. Tsarist agents, sent to the Ukraine under various pretexts, conducted themselves as conquerors rather than as allies of an independent power.[2] Recognizing his historical error in voluntarily submitting the Ukraine to Russian rule, Khmelnitzkyj mad vain preparations to drive out the Tsar's forces. His sudden death on August 6, 1657, interrupted his plans, and gave the Russian officials the opportunity to impose, without consulting the local government, more and more of the Tsar's laws and decrees upon the Ukraine. After Khmelnitzkyj's death, the Moscovite rulers found themselves in a very favorable situation. There was no leadership in the Ukraine capable of combatting the Russian occupation policy and of inspiring the Ukrainian people, exhausted in wars with the Tartars and Poles, to resist the forcible restrictions governing the Ukraine's independence.

Fifty-five years later, Hetman Ivan Mazepa, esteemed by Ukrainians as the most loyal servant of Tsar Peter I, concluded a secret agreement (1708), aimed at shaking off the Russian rule, with the Swedish King Charles XII. When the Swedish forces entered the Ukrainian frontiers, Mazepa issued a proclamation to his Cossacks to join the

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1 Ukraine is the second largest of the Soviet republics with a present population of approximately 50 millions of which about 42 millions are Ukranians. After World War I, the country was divided between the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. As a result of World War II, all Ukrainian territories came under the rule of the Kremlin, and were made parts of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, which is a member of the United Nations.

2 For the detailed story see G. Vernadsky, *Bohdan, Hetman of Ukraine* (New Haven, 1941).

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175 King and to regain their lost independence. However, his appeal was distrusted because of his loyalty to the Tsar. As a result, only a small Cossack force joined the King's army; and it was defeated in the battle of Poltava on July 10, 1709. Russian military units occupied the entire territory of the Ukraine and made it a province of Russia. Gradually, even the existence of a separate Ukrainian nationality was denied by the Russians; but the spirit of lost liberty could not be completely destroyed. The opposition against the Tsar's oppression was felt and later promoted by the greatest Ukrainian poet, Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) who, because of his courage, was forced to spend a considerable length of time in exile. The Russian reaction to the stirrings among the Ukrainian masses inspired by Shevchenko was a more severe and inhuman suppression. The lowest point of Russian chauvinism was reached when the Minister of the Interior, Count P. Valuev, issued on June 21, (June 8, old style) 1863 a ukase in which he angrily stated that "a Little Russian (Ukrainian) nationality never has existed, does not exist and cannot exist." [3] On May 18, 1876, Tsar Alexander II signed in Ems a special order prohibiting the use of the Ukrainian language in literature.[4] This order was remitted in 1905 but reimposed in full force in 1914 at the beginning of World War I. The Tsarist policy of oppression of non-Russian peoples was among the factors which contributed to the collapse of its regime in March, 1917.

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668 After the fall of the monarchy, the non-Russian peoples availed themselves of the first opportunity to regain their freedom.[5] In the Ukraine, a National Central Rada (Council) was spontaneously organized in April, 1917 under the presidency of a well known historian, Mychajlo Hruschevskyj. This National Rada was recognized and welcomed as the representative organ of the Ukraine by the Congress of Ukrainian soldiers in Kiev in 1917, by the Peasants Congress of Ukraine, and by the Worker's Congress, July 1917. The political

3 T. G. Mazaryk, *The Spirit of Russia* (New York, 1919), p. 304.

4 D. Doroshensko, *History of the Ukraine* (Edmonton, 1939), p. 591.

5 The major non-Russian nationalities in the former Russian empire such as the Ukrainians, Byelo-Russians, Georgians, Azerbaijans, Armenians, Kasakhs, etc. have a long history of struggle aaginst Russian imperialism and oppression. However, former historians and Tsarist representatives abroad refer to them as Russians, despite the difference of culture and languages. This oversimplification of the real facts caused much confusion in the Western world in the past. Even today many responsible individuals refer to the Soviet Union simply as Russia.

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668 parties which came into legal existence sent, together with national minorities, their representatives to the Rada.

At the beginning, the Rada did not aim to separate the Ukraine as an independent state from Russia, but asked, during the negotiations with the Provisional Government, a territorial autonomy in federation with Russia. It further demanded that the Russian Government abstain from interference in Ukrainian internal affairs. However, this modest demand was first rejected by the Provisional Government in Petersburg, and led the majority of the Ukrainian people into believing that the new Government in Russia was prepared to continue the policy of the Tsars regarding the non-Russian people. As a result, the possibility of establishing peaceful and friendly relations among the various nationalities was jeopardized by the Russians themselves.

Taking note of the strong determination on the part of the people, the Ukrainian Central Rada issued, on June 23, 1917, its first universal "declaration" in which the "Autonomous Ukrainian Republic" was proclaimed. Informing the Ukrainian people about the unsuccessful negotiations with the Provisional Government in Petersburg, the Rada declared that "from this day on, we ourselves will create our own destiny." [6] Simultaneously, a General Secretariat, with Wolodymyr Winnichenko at its head, was formed. It took shape as the Ukrainian Government while the Central Rada was reorganized as the revolutionary parliament.

648 During the short life of the Provisional Government, only the Bolshevik Party took the existing facts into account. Lenin, who previously did not believe in a Bolshevik victory in Russia during his lifetime, recognized, after his return from Switzerland in April, 1917, that administrative incapacity and the political blunders of the Provisional Government offered a reasonable chance immediately to seize political power in Russia. Analyzing the situation, Lenin introduced the program of the Bolshevik Party which promoted such revolutionary slogans as self-determination of nations within Russia and their right

6 M. Hrushevsky, *The History of Ukraine* (New Haven, 1945), p. 526.

7 The Seventh (April) Conference of the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labor (Bolshevik) Party, held on May 7-12, 1917 adopted a resolution on the National Question in which the policy toward non-Russian peoples was formulated. Among other points, the resolution stressed: "The right of all nations forming part of Russia to freely secede and form independent states shall be recognized. To negate this right or to fail to take measures guaranteeing its practical realization, is equivalent to supporting a policy of seizure and annexation. . . ."

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to secede from Russia.[7] At the beginning, these revolutionary slogans won many sympathizers for the Bolsheviks among non-Russian nations, since it was believed that the Bolshevik Party was the only political group in Russia which would not oppose the creation of the national States. For example, Stalin, whom Lenin deemed an expert on the national question, went so far as to openly denounce the methods of the Provisional Government in dealing with the Ukrainian problems. He declared that the accusation of treason levelled against the leaders of the Ukraine only concealed the plan to destroy the idea of national liberation. Shortly before the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution, Stalin wrote:

> No one has the right to interfere in the internal life of nations and to correct their mistakes by force. The nations are independent in the question of their internal life; therefore, they have the right to determine freely their own destiny.[8]

Only at a time of crisis, when the Provisional Government began to lose control over the developments in Russia, did its representatives I. G. Tsereteli, M. Tereschenko and A. Kerensky resume negotiations with the Rada[1] in Kiev. A compromise agreement was concluded on July 11, 1917 in which the Provisional Government recognized "without delay" the autonomy of the Ukraine and the General Secretariat as the governing body of Ukrainian affairs. The result of this agreement was proclaimed in the second universal "declaration" to the Ukrainian people on July 16, 1917. Even then, many representatives of the Provisional Government were reluctant to recognize the existing facts. Prime Minister G. E. Lvoff as well as his Cadet Ministers (Constitutional Democrats) resigned on July 16, 1917 in protest against the "concessions" granted to the Ukrainians.[9]

While the Provisional Government continued the struggle against the Ukraine, the Bolshevik Party recognized, without hesitation, the Ukrainian Rada as the legal government. However, later develop-

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8 J. V. Stalin, "Counter-revolution and the People of Russia," *Sotchineniya*, Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1946), p. 207.

9 The American Ambassador in Russia, Francis, informed the Secretary of State on July 16, 1918: ". . . Cause (of the resignation of the Cadet Ministers) attributed is that Minister of War, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Posts and Telegraphs who returned yesterday from Ukraine had granted that province concessions with which Cadet party unable to agree. . . ." Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia 1918*, Vol. II (Washington, 1932), p. 646.

1 [the National Central Rada (Council) organized in 1917 — Analyst]

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ments proved that this was only a formal recognition of existing facts and a desire to win confidence among non-Russian people. The Provisional Government's mistakes and incompetence resulted in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, which led to the establishment of the Soviet regime.[10]

After the revolution, Stalin was appointed Commissar of Nationalities. Lenin believed that the appointment of the non-Russian Dzugashwili to this post would make the Bolshevik slogans even more acceptable to the non-Russian peoples. He had ready plans for the occupation of the Ukraine and other semi-independent countries but did not have the military might needed to crush their national Governments. Therefore, Lenin turned to the method of infiltrating destructive forces into the Ukraine in order to weaken its independence from within. The Bolsheviks were aware of the fact that, if the Ukraine remained independent, Soviet Russia would have tremendous difficulties in carrying out the plan of "liberation" of other countries in the future. Therefore, the declaration of the right of nations to self-determination, officially proclaimed by the Bolsheviks, proved to be valid only as long as it served the purpose of strengthening the Soviet regime. Once the Bolsheviks were in power, they openly demonstrated that between the policy of white and red Moscow toward the Ukraine there was little or no difference. Recognizing this fact, the formerly subjugated nations were even more determined to promote their liberation from Moscow. On November 20, 1917, the Ukrainian National Rada proclaimed independence by issuing the Third Universal. The Government still believed in an eventual federation with a free Russia, which would recognize Ukrainian independence and would abstain from interference in its internal affairs. This viewpoint was expressed in a note to the Allied powers.[11] Again, the Russian anti-Soviet political and military leaders refused to accept such

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10 Professor Masaryk, former President of the Czechoslovakian Republic and a well known authority on Russia, comments on the easy Bolshevik victory: "The way for Lenin's regime had been prepared by the Provisional Government and by Kerensky, both of whom showed administrative incapacity and entrusted wide spheres of action to bad and incompetent men. . . . Lenin was a logical consequence of Russian illogicality." *The Making of a State, Memories and Observances, 1914-1918* (London, 1927), p. 176.

11 On December 12, 1917, the Secretary of State for International Affairs of the Ukraine, Shulgin, despatched notes to the Allied powers informing them about the desire of the Ukrainian Government to enter into friendly relations with the free States as an independent power. *Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 630.

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a solution. At a later date, these anti-Soviet forces indirectly helped the Bolsheviks to remain in power.[12]

On December 17, 1917, Lenin dispatched an ultimatum to the Ukrainian Rada in which he demanded: recognize the Soviet Government within forty-eight hours or take the consequences of an open war. With this action, the Soviet Government inaugurated the policy of "persuasion" by force. The Rada rejected the Soviet ultimatum in an answer on December 19, 1917, and urged the Ukrainian people to be prepared to defend their freedom.[13] The determination of the Ukrainian people to defend their liberty forced the Bolsheviks to change their tactics. They decided to postpone their open aggression and instead to appeal directly to the Ukrainian masses.

The Bolsheviks inspired a Congress of workers and peasants to meet at Kiev on December 18, 1917. Contrary to their expectations, a large majority of the delegates took an energetic stand for the right of the Rada to represent the Ukrainian people. Only 80 out of a total of 2,000 delegates supported the Bolsheviks. This small minority proceeded to Kharkov, where the Congress of Proletarians (radical elements from Donez Basin, mostly non-Ukrainians), was held. At the session of Decemer 27, 1917, this group proclaimed itself the "only representative body" of the Ukraine and issued an appeal for help to the Soviet Government of Russia. Two days later, the Sovnarcom welcomed, in a special resolution, this "new revolutionary Govern-

12 In his report "On National Factors in Party and State Development" Stalin stated: "Do not forget such reserves as those constituted by the oppressed peoples, who remain silent, but whose very silence exerts pressure and decides much. This is often not felt, but these peoples live, they exist, and they must not be forgotten. Yes, Comrades, it is dangerous to forget them. Do not forget that if in the rear of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel and Yudenich we had not had the so-called 'aliens,' the oppressed people who disorganized the rear of these generals by their tacit sympathy for the Russian proletarians —comrades, this is a specific factor in our development, this tacit sympathy, which nobody hears or sees, but which decides everything—if it were not for this sympathy, we would not have nailed a single one of these generals. While we were advancing on them, their rear was disintegrating. Why? Because these generals depended on the colonizing elements among the Cossacks, they held out to the oppressed peoples the prospect of further oppression, and the oppressed people were therefore *forced* into our arms while we held aloft the banner of the liberation of these oppressed peoples. That is what decided the fate of these generals; those are the factors which, although thy are obscured by the victories of our armies, in the long run decided everything. This must not be forgotten." *XII. Sjezd Rossijskoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), Stenograficheskij otchet, April 17-25, 1923* (Glavpolitprosvet, Moscow, 1923), p. 455.

13 Both the Soviet ultimatum as well as the answer of the Ukrainian Government is cited in James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1918* (New York), pp. 437-438.

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ment" of the Ukraine and promised it unlimited help.[14] On December 29, 1917, the Red Army under command of former Tsarist Colonel Muraviov invaded the Ukrainian frontiers. The open war between Soviet-Russia and the Ukraine was a reality.[15]

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Despite many internal and external difficulties, the Ukrainian Government offered sufficient evidence that the people were capable of governing themselves and of defending their freedom. The Ukraine, by opposing and fighting Bolshevism—increasingly regarded as the new danger to civilization—won the sympathy of many free countries. On January 11, 1918, the French High Commissioner in Kiev, General Tabouis, was instructed by the French Government to accord in its name de-facto recognition of the Ukrainian Independent State. The British Government on January 12, 1918 delegated Bogge, its High Commissioner in Kiev, to wait only for the proper moment to recognize, together with other Allied powers, the Independence of the Ukraine. The United States also considered the recognition of the Ukrainian State after the American Consul General at Moscow informed the Secretary of State of the necessity for such a step.[16]

The Ukrainian Government's efforts to establish friendly relations with foreign countries caused the Bolsheviks to conclude that, despite their promises and changes in method, they were in no position to destroy the power of national revolutions in border countries. Lenin undoubtedly realized that in order to occupy the Ukraine, he must first make peace with external enemies. For this reason he hastened the armistice negotiations, already in progress, with the Central powers at Brest-Litovsk. During the previous negotiations the Soviet delegation, under Joffe's and later under Trotsky's leadership, entirely ignored the existence of an Ukrainian state. They acted as if the Russian delegates were the legal representatives not only of the Rus-

14 Stalin's article, "What is Ukrainian Rada?" *Pravda*, December 29 (15 old style), 1917.

15 At the time when Bolshevik forces terrorized and looted the people of the Ukraine, Stalin wrote: "The people of Russia should know, that the idea of invasion of a foreign territory is strange to the Russian revolution. All people should know, that in contrast to the imperialist policy of national oppression, the Soviet government practices the policy of total liberation." *Pravda*, December 31 (old style), 1917. Cf. J. V. Stalin, *Sotchineniya*, Vol. IV (Moscow, 1947), p. 25.

16 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 655-657.

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sian but also of the Ukrainian people. This Soviet attitude reached Kiev, capitol of the Ukraine, at a time when Bolshevik forces were launching a new attack against the Ukraine with the goal of occupying Kiev at all cost. To combat the Soviet tactics at the peace Conference, the Central Rada immediately sent its plenipotentiaries to Brest-Litovsk. For ten days, the Ukrainian delegates demanded a place at the Conference table and were finally admitted to negotiations as an independent power on January 12, 1918.

In order to clarify the Ukraine's position in international relations as an independent state, the Central Rada on January 22, 1918 proclaimed total independence in the Fourth Universal.[17] On February 9, 1918, the plenipotentiaries concluded and signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers who officially recognized the sovereignty of the Ukraine.[18] Meanwhile, the Bolshevik forces succeeded in occupying large areas of the Ukraine, including Kiev.

On February 12, 1918, the Ukrainian Government formally requested the Central Powers to intervene and to help in driving out the Bolsheviks. As a result, German and Austrian armies entered the Ukraine and were welcomed by the population as liberators from Red terror and oppression. The swift advance of these forces on the whole front forced the Soviet Government in Petrograd to sign the previously-rejected peace treaty with the Central powers on March 10, 1918, the treaty in which the Bolsheviks also recognized the Ukrainian Independent State. The Ukrainian Government, having resumed full activity, trusted that the Central powers' military command would respect its independence and would not interfere in internal affairs. However, these expectations did not materialize. The Germans not only interterfered in the internal life but, gradually, conducted themselves as conquerors of the country. When the Central Rada protested against the open violation of the treaty by the occupation forces, the German Military command under General Eichorn dissolved the Ukrainian Government on April 26, 1918 and arrested the majority of its members.[19] Even the proclamation of General Pavlo Skoropadskyj as

17 The full text of the Fourth Universal is cited in James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

18 For a detailed story on the Brest-Litovsk Peace, see John W. Wheeler, *Brest-Litovsk, The Forgotten Peace* (New York, 1939).

19 For an official report on the Ukrainian-German conflicts as read by German Deputy Scheidemann in the Reichstag Committee in Berlin, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 684.

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648 Hetman of the Ukraine (April 29, 1918) did not change the situation, since a large majority of the people considered him head of a puppet government created with the help of German bayonets and, therefore, subservient to German dictation.

After the defeat of the Central powers by the Western allies at the end of 1918, the German sponsored Government was replaced by a new Ukrainian Government called "Directorium" under the leadership of Simon Petliura. At the same time, the Soviet Government annulled the Brest-Litovsk treaty and ordered its military forces to enter the Ukraine. A new war between the Ukraine and Soviet Russia began. Since the Germans had prevented the formation of a Ukrainian army, the Bolsheviks were at an advantage. In desperation, Petliura made a last attempt to combat Bolshevik aggression by concluding a very unfavorable military alliance with the Polish Government under Pilsudski's leadership.[20] The advance of the United Polish-Ukrainian Army during the summer of 1920 was reversed by a Bolshevik counter offensive. As a result, the allied forces were driven out of the Ukraine. Subsequently, the Soviet and Polish Governments agreed, in the treaty of Riga of March 18, 1921, to divide the Ukrainian territories between themselves.

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642 668 After the destruction of Ukrainian statehood, Bolsheviks formed an "independent" Soviet Ukrainian Government, the members of which, directly appointed by the Kremlin, were totally subordinated to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. At this time, Stalin was in a position to openly reveal the true meaning of the Bolshevik proclamations concerning the right of non-Russian nations to self-determination when he wrote:

> We are in favor of the separation of India, Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and the other colonies from the entente, for here separation implies the liberation of these oppressed countries from Imperialism, thus undermining the position of Imperialism and strengthening the position of revolution. We are against the separation of the border regions from Russia since separation would here involve Imperialist servitude for the border regions, thus undermining the revolutionary power of Russia and strengthening the position of Imperialism.[21]

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20 Winston S. Churchill attached great importance to this alliance as is obvious from his book, *The Aftermath* (New York, 1929), pp. 277-278.

21 Stalin's preface to his "Sbornik statei," 1920. Cf. *Sotchineniya*, Vol. IV (Moscow, 1947), p. 372.

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This explanation of self-determination irritated even the Ukrainian Communists who trusted the Bolshevik slogans and supported Soviet plans during the revolution. Consequently, many of them recognized the new dangers for the Ukrainian people and decided to oppose Russian Imperialism by using the Ukrainian Communist Party as a stronghold against the Centralist attitude of the Russian Communist Party.

The open conflict between Ukrainian and Russian Communists which endangered the unity of the proletarian dictatorship arose during the sessions of the 10th Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party. At this Congress, Ukrainian Communist Zatonskyj, delivered a lengthy speech, accusing the Russian Communists of leaning on traditional Russian chauvinistic forces which ignore the gravity of national movements that had arisen during the revolution. He warned that the Ukrainian masses are aware of their national consciousness and would not tolerate a new Russian oppression.[22]

The Ukrainian Bolshevik Skrypnyk, an old friend and co-worker of Lenin, also accused the majority of the members of the Russian Communist Party of chauvinism. He courageously emphasized that the national question was one of the most dangerous problems, one which should be solved if the Soviet Government were to secure its power. Answering these warnings, Stalin bluntly replied that the Bolshevik Party had taken final leave of obsolescent views on self-determination and was not willing to return to this question.[23] However, he advised the Party members to be cautious in dealing with the national problem since the existence of the non-Russian nations could not be denied. The Soviet leaders openly demonstrated that the formal recognition of the Soviet Ukraine as an "independent" state was only a Kremlin maneuver to soften anti-Communist feeling among

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22 Zatonsky further declared: "At present, Russianism received even more rights and began to flourish with a new strength. It exists everywhere and especially among the masses of our Party members; it exists not only in the border regions such as Turkestan among the Russian colonizing elements, who were forced to accept Communism, but it exists here in Moscow in our Central administration. . . . We have to erase from the minds of our comrades the image of the Soviet Federation as a Russian one, since the question is not whether it is a Russian but whether it is a Soviet Federation. When for example, Rumania or Germany or any other country becomes a member of the Soviet Federation will it also be called 'Russian?' Of course not! . . ." *X. Sjezd Rossijskoji Communisticheskoji Partipi (B), March 8-16, 1921,* Stenograficheskij ocher (Moscow, 1921), p. 110.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

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668 the Ukrainian people. This was especially obvious when the Congress adopted a resolution calling for the liquidation of the "independence" of various Soviet Republics because, the Soviet leaders claimed, "not a single Soviet Republic, taken alone, can regard itself as secure against economic exhaustion and military destruction on the part of world Imperialism." [24] In order to eliminate the potential opposition and distrust among the non-Russian Communists, the Congress formally condemned Great Russian chauvinism as harmful, because of its colonizing spirit, to the cause of Communism. This condemnation, however, did not have any practical significance. The Soviet Commissars in the Ukraine continued the policy of strict centralization and Russification. The Ukrainian Communists could not tolerate this policy without losing face; and they demanded that the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party recall its Commissars. This demand was flatly rejected by the Kremlin with an admonition: the Soviet officials in the Ukraine must be accepted as the only executive force. Much to Lenin's surprise, the Ukrainian Communist Party at the end of 1921 dismissed the Kremlin-appointed Commissars from their duties and elected members from their own ranks for the important positions. This independent attitude of the Ukrainian Communists annoyed the Russian leaders so much that Lenin was obliged to intervene personally in the matter. In his speech at the eleventh Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party, Lenin warned that, despite the recognition of the Ukraine as an independent Soviet Republic, the Bolsheviks would not permit Ukrainian leaders to deviate from the Party principles. Lenin further informed the Congress that he had assigned "Comrade" Ordzonikidze and the Central Committee to investigate the whole matter. He admitted that, according to them, it would require ten years to compile a detailed report on the events in the Ukraine. "One thing," Lenin said, "is clear, that despite the unanimously-adopted instructions of the Central Committee, the group (appointed by the Kremlin) was replaced by the local group." [25]

642 668 The internal difficulties and independent attitude taken by the non-Russian Communists forced the Soviet leaders in Moscow to press their original plan of more centralization. On December 29, 1922, the plenipotentiary delegates of the Russian (R.S.F.S.R.), the Ukrain-

24 "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in Connection with the National Problem" Resolution adopted by the Tenth Congress.

25 *XI. Sjezd Rossijskoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B) March 27-April 1922*, Stenograficheskij otchet (Partizdat, Moscow), p. 31.

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ian (UKR.S.S.R.), the Byelo-Russian (W.R.S.S.R.) and the Transcaucasian (T.S.F.S.R.—Georgia, Azerbaidzan and Armenia) Socialist Republics concluded, under Moscow's auspices, a treaty providing amalgamation into a single federated state—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The terms of the treaty gave the Central Soviet Government in Moscow practically unlimited power.[26] The Russian Communist Party secured its legal right to intervene in the internal affairs of the member States and to suppress the opposition against Moscow among the non-Russian Communists. However, the non-Russian leaders of the Soviet Republics were reluctant to surrender their positions and the struggle between Russian and non-Russian Communists continued with even more fervor.

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The controversy over the national policy reached its climax at the twelfth Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party. In his report, Stalin spoke at length on the internal and international significance of the national question.[27] For the first time he attacked not only Great Russian chauvinism but also local nationalism as an equal danger to the Soviet regime. Referring to the penetration of elements with a Great Russian spirit into the highest ranks of the Communist Party, Stalin said:

> It is not accidental, comrades, that the Smenovekhists[28] have recruited a large number of supporters from among the Soviet officials. That is by no means accidental. Nor is it accidental that Messrs. the Smenovekhists are lauding the Bolshevik Communists, saying, as it were, 'You may talk as much as you like about Bolshevism, you may prate as much as you like about your internationalist tendencies, but we know that what Denikin failed to do, you will do; that you, Bolsheviks have resurrected, or at least are going to resurrect the great idea of a Great Russia.'[29]

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26 The Russian Communist Party was in a position to adopt any resolution, since the great majority of the Party members were Russians. At the eleventh Congress, for example, when the question of amalgamation of the republics was raised and the resolution for strict centralization approved, the delegates consisted of 341 Russians, 77 Jews, 10 Tartars, 12 Armenians, 9 Georgians, 19 Latvians, 8 Kirghizs and 46 others.

27 *XII. Sjezd Rossijskoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), op. cit.*, p. 441.

28 ". . . Smenovechovzy—former members of the White Army who now recognized the victory of the Red Army as a national victory, the deliverance of Russia from western Europe, and the birth of a new Russian empire of Asiatic orientation . . . (p. 137). . . . The name 'Smenovechovzy' has been coined after a collection of essays entitled 'Smena Vech,' 'the change of signposts' (Prague, 1931). A collection of essays published in 1909, called 'Vechi' advocated a change of policy by the Russian intelligentsia. In the 'Smena Vech' the change was to take the form of recognizing Bolshevism as a national government." (pp. 386-387) W. Gurian, *Bolshevism: Theory and Practice* (New York, 1932).

29 *XII. Sjezd Rossijskoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), op. cit.*, p. 442.

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668 Stalin further stressed that the promotion of the idea of a single and indivisible Russia would forever forfeit the confidence in Russia of the formerly oppressed people. He admitted that hostile tendencies towards Moscow among non-Russian peoples were growing rapidly, and urged the Congress to adopt every possible measure which would win for the Soviet Government respect and "love" in the Republics and which would also make the Soviet Government not merely Russian, but international.

Russian chauvinism had also been bitterly attacked by Skrypnyk, who emphasized the inability of Russians to recognize existing facts. He insisted that not one single point of the resolutions adopted at the tenth Congress had been put into effect. He complained that Ukrainians, living in Russia outside the border of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic and numbering approximately 7,000,000 were left in a cultural and educational void and that Ukrainians in the Red Army were under the pressure of forcible Russification. Skrypnyk further declared:

> There exists only a theoretical admission of the national question; when it is time to act, we show neither will nor force. Great state fictions imbibed at the mother's breast have become instinctive among many comrades. We need only to recall how many of our comrades were painfully touched when our Congress accepted the name of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and not Russian Soviet Socialist Republics.[30]

In addition, Skrypnyk denounced Stalin's attempt to compare Great-Russian chauvinism with the local nationalism of the non-Russian peoples. He claimed that such an interpretation of the problem would encourage the Russians, employing the excuse of fighting local nationalism, to continue their policy of Russification. Even Rakowskyj, the Kremlin-appointed president of the Soviet Ukraine, who previously rejected the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination, changed his mind after facing reality in the Ukraine and declared that the national question, if it remained ignored, was one which could cause Soviet Russia and the Party tremendous difficulties. He warned that, should the Russians continue the policy of oppression, civil war would be resumed, with even firmer effort on the part of the non-Russian peoples to secede from Russia. Rakowskyj energetically besought a practical solution, based on factual equality, of the

30 *Ibid.*, p. 522.

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problem. With regard to the Ukrainian language, the President stated: 668

> I heard talks among our comrades, that the Ukrainian language is nothing but a fiction of the Galicians (Western Ukrainians). Does this not demonstrate the Great-Russian power feelings of the Russian men, who never experienced a national oppression but on the contrary oppressed other nationalities for hundreds of years?[31]

Answering these warnings and accusations, Stalin replied:

> Besides the right of nations to self-determination, there exists also the right of the working class to consolidate its power and to establish the dictatorship, and to this latter right the right of self-determination is subordinate.[32]

The twelfth Congress passed another resolution on the "National Question," in which the Russian Communist Party pledged to free itself from Russian chauvinism. However, the most important decision of the twelfth Congress was the adoption of the so-called Ukrainianization policy. According to this policy, all Party and State institutions in the Ukraine were advised to use and to promote the Ukrainian language in dealing with the people. The reason behind the acceptance of this policy, was obvious: the Communist Party in the Ukraine could not win influence among the Ukrainian people, since the peasants referred to it as a Russian Party, interested only in the exploitation of their country.[33] By introducing the new policy the Soviet leaders hoped to establish closer contact with the masses. But Ukrainianization became national and revolutionary in substance. In 1925-26, a well-organized opposition group of Ukrainian Communists, led by Shumskyj, Maximovich, Khvylovyj, Volobuyev and others, advocated a type of national Communism which in today's language could be labeled as "Titoism." Volobuyev went so far as to declare that the Soviet Russian economic policy was nothing but a colonial exploitation of the Ukrainian people.

The Kremlin was alerted. The Soviet Russian leaders were aware of the growing dangers of this opposition in the Soviet Republics but were unable to take effective action to combat it. The Russian Com-

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31 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-534.

32 Cf. J. V. Stalin, *Sotchineniya*, Vol. V (Moscow, 1947), p. 265.

33 At the twelfth Congress the delegates were composed as follows: 60.8% Russians, 11.3% Jews, 7.1% Latvians and Estonians, 4.7% Ukrainians, 2.7% Georgians, 2.4% Armenians, 1.2% Byelo-Russians, 1.7% Kirghizs, 1% Tartars, 7.1% others.

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668 munist Party was itself in a very serious crisis. After Lenin's death on January 21, 1924, the top Party officials struggled among themselves for political leadership. For this reason, the national question was not even raised at the fourteenth Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party held on December 18 to 31, 1925. The Congress was entirely occupied with ironing out the sharp split within the Party. Despite the strong opposition lead by Sinoviev and Kamenev, who fought for a collective responsibility of the Politburo, the Congress made Stalin the individual dictator of the Party, giving him unrestricted authority.[34]

668 517 Utilizing this struggle between the Russian Communists, Ukrainian writers and historians wrote and published new literature about their past and inspired resistance to Moscow's domination. One of the most influential among these writers with the courage to reject openly Moscow's right to dominate his people was Mykola Khvylovyj. During the revolution he was among the Ukrainian Communists who were misled by Bolshevik slogans and took active part in the struggle against the "bourgeois" national Government of the Ukraine. He believed in the international program of the Russian Communist Party which promised the people "land, liberty and friendship among nations." Under the impact of existing developments, however, Khvylovyj realized that the Russian Bolsheviks nurtured the idea of the "single and indivisible Russia" and that only the forms of oppression were changed. His conclusion was based upon the fact that the Bolshevik recognition of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic was composed of empty phrases and deceptions since the real political force in the Ukraine was concentrated in Russian hands. Khvylovyj now openly declared that his people could survive as a nation and live in freedom and peace only if they are able to secede from Russia. His appeal, "Away from Moscow, back to Europe," was received by Ukrainians with enthusiasm and by the Soviet leaders with considerable anxiety. Referring to the dangerous influence of Khvylovyj's writings, Stalin wrote:

> Khvylovyj's demand for "The immediate russification of the proletariat" of the Ukraine, his opinion that "Ukrainian poetry must get

34 For the story of Stalin's seizure of power see: *XIV. Sjezd Wsesojuznoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), December 18-31, 1925*, Stenograficheskij otchet (Partizdat, Moscow, 1926), pp. 207-298.

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away from the Russian literature and its style as quickly as possible," his assertion that "the ideas of the proletariat are known to us without Moscow art," his enthusiasm for a sort of Messianic role of the "young" Ukrainian intelligentsia and his ludicrous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this, and much like it, in the mouth of a Ukrainian Communist now sounds (must sound) more than strange. Whereas the proletarians of Western Europe and their Communist Parties are full of sympathy for "Moscow" the citadel of the international revolutionary movement and of Leninism, whereas the proletarians of Western Europe turn with joy toward the banner waving over Moscow, the Ukrainian Communist Khvylovyj has nothing better to say for "Moscow" than to appeal to Ukrainian public men to get away from "Moscow as quickly as possible!" And this is called internationalism! What can we say of other Ukrainian intellectuals, not belonging to the Communist camp, if Communists begin to talk, and not only talk, but also to write in our Soviet press, in the language of Comrade Khvylovyj?[35]

Despite the fact that the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic secured for Moscow centralized power, internal developments in the Ukraine were at first not affected as much as many Russian Communists anticipated. On the contrary, the first years of Union status were marked by the promotion of Soviet Ukrainian statehood. Alongside the Kremlin's appointed Commissariats, the Ukraine possessed a well-organized administration of its own and its "Government" took very seriously the creation of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic. Kharkov and later Kiev defended the interests of the Ukraine with steadfast determination. The growth of a Ukrainian culture national in substance, fostered by Khvylovyj, progressed so rapidly that Stalin was again stirred to an open admission of its danger when he said in 1929:

> If we had nothing else but these discussions about Khvylovyj, which have become so wide and heated in the Ukraine, there would already be enough for profound alarm.[36]

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The national question was once again raised at the sixteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party. Stalin proposed a new Nationalities' policy which would promote a culture socialistic in sub-

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35 J. V. Stalin's letter "To Comrade Kaganovich and other members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) of Ukraine," dated April 26, 1926, first published in a complete form in *Sotchineniya*, Vol. VIII (Moscow, 1948), pp. 149-154.

36 Cf. Mykola Sciborsky, *Ukraine and Russia* (New York, 1940), p. 43.

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stance and national only in form. He demanded severe punishment of the advocates of national cultures with hostile tendencies toward Moscow. Postishev, Stalin's deputy in the Ukraine, informed the Congress about the already successful suppression and persecution of the Ukrainian national movement. But he added that many Russian intellectuals in the Ukraine, encouraged by this new policy, suggested that even the Ukrainian language should be supplanted in schools by some kind of new language, possibly Esperanto.[37] He also stated that under the pressure of the Communist Party, the deviationists, Shumskyj and Khvylovyj, admitted their errors and acknowledged the correctness of the Party policy.

At this Congress, new factors relating to Ukrainian-Soviet difficulties were introduced. For the first time in the existence of the Soviet regime, Postishev reported that the O.G.P.U. had uncovered a counter-revolutionary organization in the Ukraine called the "Ukrainian National Socialist Party." Many of the members of this organization, according to Postishev, were Ukrainian Communists. Its primary aim was to form an Independent Democratic Republic. Kaganovich, another Kremlin deputy in the Ukraine, revealed the existence of a second conspiratory counter-revolutionary organization with headquarters in the Ministry of Agriculture.[38] Skrypnyk made a vain attempt to rescue the situation. He blamed Russian chauvinism for the rebirth of Ukrainian nationalism and made clear that the continuation of Soviet-Russian policy in the Ukraine would force more and more Ukrainians into the underground. Skrypnyk complained that the declaration of the right of nations, set forth on November 15, 1917, proved to be for many Russians merely a screen behind which Moscow had hidden a plan for further oppression. For many Russians, he stressed, it was only a tactical maneuver, but for the non-Russian nations, it was a most important document. No wonder, Skrypnyk added, that some Russians go so far as to declare that this important declaration of our Party was valid only until the October revolution, and that after October, it should be considered as a counter-revolutionary slogan. Skrypnyk concluded, "There cannot even be a discussion about any revision of Lenin's policy, nor of any

37 *XVI. Sjezd Wsesojuznoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), June 26-July13, 1930*, Stenograficheski otchet, Partizdat (Moscow, 1930), p. 108.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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restrictions, and still less about liquidation of the national federative and autonomous republics." [39]

Aware of the dangerous position in which he placed himself by accusing Russian "Comrades" of chauvinism at a time when Stalin already belonged to that camp, Skrypnyk could not afford to fail to attack the deviationist tendencies of some Ukrainian "Comrades" in the Party. He pledged to help persecute without mercy all elements with nationalistic leanings.

At the beginning of 1930 the Soviet Secret Police uncovered the existence of another Ukrainian conspiratory organization called "Spilka Vyzvolennia Ukrainy" (The Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine). The forty-day trial that followed in one of Kharkov's largest theaters disclosed that the organization's political aim was the restoration of the Independent National Ukrainian State and that it was in contact with the Ukrainian political emigrees.[40] More than forty-five well known Ukrainians, among them members of the Ukrainian Academy of Science, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In addition, some 4,000 members of the Youth Organization, Comsomol, were arrested. But in 1931 the OGPU uncovered still another revolutionary organization called the "National Center." The anti-Soviet underground activities in Ukraine were supported by peasants who opposed the forcible collectivization of land introduced by Bolsheviks with the five year plan in 1928-29.

In spite of all these crises and belligerent relationships between Kiev and Moscow, Skrypnyk continued to advocate the conception of Soviet Ukrainian Statehood, an idea which by now was entirely in contradiction to the official Soviet viewpoint. When he finally demanded the formation of a special Ukrainian Red Army, and the incorporation of the Ukrainian territories still under Russian administration into the Ukraine, Stalin lost his patience and summoned Skrypnyk to Moscow for an explanation. After his return in July, 1933, Skrypnyk (a member of the Communist Party since 1897, coworker of Lenin, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, head of the Council of Nationalities of the U.S.S.R. and Vice-Premier of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic) committed suicide, according to the official anouncement. After his death, he was accused of Ukrainian nationalistic leanings and of treasonable disloyalty to

39 *Ibid.*, p. 243.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 243.

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668 the cause of Leninism. Only a few weeks before Skrypnyk's death, Khvylovyj, long the subject of refined persecution by the Soviet authorities, had been driven to commit suicide (May, 1933). According to information provided by his close friends, Khvylovyj left a note saying "I am dying because I love life."

668 661 Acting upon Stalin's order to persecute Ukrainian "nationalism," Postishev stated, in a report to the plenary session of the Ukrainian Communist Party, November 19, 1933, that the discovery of Skrypnyk's deviation[1] led to the purging from the Ukrainian Socialist culture of any adherence to Petliura's, Machno's and other national elements. He also declared that within a few months 27,000 members, out of a total membership of 125,000 were expelled from the party, along with 1,300 members of the Comsomol. Relieved of their posts were 240 secretaries of regional committees of the Communist Party, 250 heads of "Ispolkoms," 150 heads of controlling committees, about 1,000 officials of the Commissariat of Education, about 2,000 co-operative workers and 300 professors of various educational institutions beginning with the Ukrainian Academy of Science.[41]

Despite the increase of physical and moral terrorism, Moscow did not succeed in eliminating resistance to its rule in the Ukraine. Early in 1933 the Soviet Secret Police reported the existence of a new well-organized and disciplined underground organization, this time the "Ukrainian Military Organization," whose large membership included commanders of the Red Army, scientific workers and young intelligentsia. The aim of this group was similar to that of the ones previously uncovered, excepting that the Ukrainian Military Organization was preparing a military revolt against the existing order.

The Soviet difficulties in the Ukraine were again illustrated at the seventeenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party. In his report on the dangerous developments in Ukraine, Stalin stated:

> The fall of Skrypnyk and his group in the Ukraine is not exceptional. Similar 'dislocations' are observable among certain comrades in other national republics.[42]

Describing the spread of local nationalism and labeling it as far more perilous for the Soviet rule than Russian chauvinism, Stalin continued:

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41 Sciborsky, *Ukraine and Russia*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

42 *XVII. Sjezd Wsesojuznoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B). January 26-February 10, 1934*, Stenograficheskij otchet (Partizdat, Moscow, 1934), p. 30.

1 [cf. category 116, pp. 220-222 — Analyst]

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> Only very recently, in the Ukraine, the deviation towards Ukrainian nationalism did not represent the major danger; but when we ceased to fight it and enabled it to grow to the extent that it joined forces with the interventionists, this deviation became the major danger.[43]

The discussion of the national question was brought to a final halt at the seventeenth Congress and the Soviet Government decided to use police terror against the opposition.[44] Following this policy, new purges were instigated and every sign of dissatisfaction with the Bolshevik order was simply suppressed by Stalin's GPU.

The various stages of Soviet tactics in regard to the national policy—the recognition of the independent National Republics, the formation of the Soviet Republics, the amalgamation of the Soviet Republics into a single Union on the basis of a "free" federation, and the liquidation of the formal "Independence" of the Republics—practically places the Russian Communists in the role of promoters of the idea of a "single and indivisible Russia" despite the Bolsheviks' attempts to demonstrate the Soviet regime as an inter-nationalist one The Soviet leaders started from the point where the Tsarist and Provisional governments ended and gradually arrived at the stage of strict centralization and oppression—with only the provision that the Kremlin was no longer in a position to deny, at least theoretically, the existence of the Ukrainian nation and language. The Soviet Russian press, however, was given, as far back as 1936, a green light to recover from the archives of the past such names as Ivan Kalyta, Ivan the Terrible, Tsar Peter the Great, Katherina II and others.

The struggle against the Ukrainian "nationalists" was carried out until "all" independent elements, including many members of the Ukrainian Communist Party, were executed or silenced. Only after the employment of total terror could the Soviet regime officially "boast"

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43 Stalin's report, *ibid.*, p. 32.

44 Describing the tactics of the Ukrainian opposition, Postishev concluded: "The Ukrainian nationalists have an interesting system of distributing their units. Take for example the People's Commissariat of Education. Its director was Yavorsky; Yavorsky went, then came Ozersky; Ozersky went, then came Konyk; all of them proved to be members of the Ukrainian Military Organization, and its leaders at that. Or take the case of the one with the power of attorney in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. There you had Maximovich; Maximovich went, then came Petrenko; Petrenko went, then came Tur—again all members of the UWO (Ukrainian Military Organization), even of its directing clique. It was the same in all the places which they controlled. They maintained the principle of always substituting their own people. Once they got control of a responsible department, they would not let it out of their hands." Postishev's report, *ibid.*, p. 70.

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668 of the triumph and success of "brotherly" cooperation among various
661 nations under the leadership of the great Russian people and the "wisest" Stalin. Nevertheless, these proclamations of co-operation were soon negated by existing facts. Again *Pravda* reported new anti-Soviet activity of the "enemies of the People" in the youth organization (Comsomol) in the Ukraine:

> There is uncovered again the unseemly sight of the work of counter-revolutionaries and spies within the Comsomol of the Ukraine. Masking themselves in a base fashion, they carry on disruptive counter-revolutionary work. They consciously fouled the cadres of the Comsomol and the propaganda apparatus and they ruined political education. They served the fascists, conducted spying activities and prepared sabotage and terroristic acts. . . . These enemies of the people placed their own men in executive posts. When these men fell at one post they were immediately transferred into another region.[45]

The resistance of the Ukrainians to Moscow's domination could not be denied. However, such statements had double meaning and were produced by the Soviet press in order to justify the policy of strict centralization and Russification in the Ukraine. Even such a loyal Moscow servant as Liubchenko, President of the Soviet Ukraine, was by now considered as a dangerous and undesirable individual since he was a Ukrainian and could hinder, as Skrypnyk did in the past, the realization of the Soviet Russian policy. For this reason he was compelled to commit suicide on September 11, 1937. In the familiar Bolshevik manner, the Soviet press informed the people that Liubchenko was involved in anti-Soviet connections and, "evidently" afraid to face his responsibility before the Ukrainian people for betraying their interests, had ended his life. Such an interpretation of Liubchenko's death—who in 1934 had praised the GPU for its successful work in "totally" destroying the "nationalist" groups within the Ukrainian Communist Party—gave the Soviet regime the "legal" right to replace most Ukrainians holding higher positions in the Soviet administration by Russians whom the Kremlin could trust. Nevertheless, passive resistance to the existing order was continually felt and could not be wiped out entirely.

186 In 1938 world tension and fear of World War II increased. Therefore, even the rise of national consciousness in the small Carp-

45 *Pravda*, July 25, 1937.

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atho-Ukraine (which after 1918 became a part of Czechoslovakia and gradually developed into an autonomous entity with its own national Ukrainian Government) caused great concern in the Kremlin. 186

In order to diminish the fear of insecurity, Khruschev, Stalin's new deputy in the Ukraine, declared that Soviet patriotism prevailed in the Ukraine and that the people were filled with hatred for all bourgeois nationalists, all those "spies, Liubchenkos, Khvylovists, Zatonskis and other evil spirits."[46] In reality, however, Khruschev was not certain of Ukrainian loyalty to the Kremlin. For this reason, he considered it necessary to remind the people of their indebtedness to Moscow for the realization of their dreams:

> Ukrainian people had struggled for many years with the Tsarist autocracy, landlords and capitalists, demanding their right to develop their own culture, to possess their own schools, publish their own literature and to learn in their own language. Only as a result of the October Socialist revolution, as a result of Lenin-Stalin national policy and Stalin's personal interest in the development of the Ukrainian culture, did we win a world-wide historical victory in the field of cultural achievements.[47]

The invasion of Carpatho-Ukraine by the Hungarian Army on March 15, 1939 was received by Moscow with relief. Stalin interpreted Hitler's approval of the Hungarian occupation of Carpatho-Ukraine to mean that Germans had abandoned their plan to invade the Soviet Union in the near future. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Government concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany. This pact was followed by the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 and the Red Army invasion on September 17 of Eastern Poland, which was inhabited mostly by Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians. The old and practically abandoned Soviet declaration of the right of nations to self-determination was once again proclaimed as valid so as legally to justify the right of the Soviet Union to intervene and to "liberate brothers", Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians, from Polish oppression. 000

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On June 22, 1941, the German Army invaded the Soviet Union.

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46 *XVIII. Sjezd Wsesojuznoji Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), March 10-21, 1939*, Stenograficheskij otchet (Partizdat, Moscow, 1939), p. 169.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 173.

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000 Now for the first time Stalin and his Politburo felt the full impact of the people's hatred toward the Bolshevik regime. Stalin realized that all demonstrations of unity and patriotism on the part of the Soviet peoples were void of sincerity. Much to Stalin's distress, the German Army was greeted as the liberators of the oppressed people from Communist tyranny. Within a few months, his position as dictator was shaken to such a degree that the Soviet regime was on the eve of collapse. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers refused to fight for the survival of the Soviet order, and surrendered to the Germans with the hope of living in freedom and in security in their own countries after the defeat of Bolshevism. However, at this time of crisis a strong ally appeared on the Bolshevik side. This ally proved to be Hitler himself with his cruel Eastern European policy of colonization and total oppression. The population of the "liberated" countries, the Ukraine, Byelo-Russia, the Baltic States, and some Caucasian regions, was brutally treated as a second class people whose only right under "civilized" German rule was to work and to obey orders as slaves. Every sign of national activity was mercilessly suppressed. The despised Soviet Kholchoz (collective farms) were not dissolved as the peasants anticipated. Stalin realized that he was in a position to utilize for his own purposes the blunders of the external enemies of the Soviet regime. First, he appealed to the patriotism of the Great Russian people and urged them to defend their freedom and their "fatherland" against the German invaders. He called upon the non-Russian people already under German occupation to resist Hitler's tyranny. With the conclusion of an alliance with the Western Powers, he not only was assured of material help, but he had also eliminated the creation of a third force. This force, in the name of liberty, might have overthrown Stalin's dictatorship and proclaimed Russia a democratic republic which would continue the war against Germany.

As a result of Stalin's maneuvers, tactics and appeals, millions of peoples throughout the world, among them even those who knew the Bolsheviks well, interpreted his declarations as the final retreat from Marx's and Lenin's doctrines of Communist World domination. Even many people among the oppressed nations were led to believe that under the pressure of the German terror and persecutions, the Soviet regime had changed and that reality had forced Stalin into concess-

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000 ions and into the promotion of democracy within the Soviet Union.[48]

Numerous difficult problems, which Stalin was anxious to solve in accordance with his plans, forced the "Generalissimo" at the end of the War to follow a cautious policy toward the non-Russian peoples, liberated from the German occupation. First, he needed time for the stabilization of his power inside the Soviet Union. For example, in the Ukraine he had considerable difficulties with the well-organized Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which emerged in 1941 as the reaction against the German terror, and now was engaged in a struggle against the Soviet occupation forces.[49] In addition, there were millions of Soviet citizens in Western Europe, former German slave laborers and prisoners of war, whose return to the Soviet "homeland" was a matter of major importance to the Soviet regime. These people were living witnesses of the failure of the Communist experiments in their countries and could have given tremendous support to the free world in Stalin's planned cold war. Consequently, the Soviet Government was anxious to reach an agreement on the question of repatriation of all Soviet citizens from the Western countries. An agreement on this matter was concluded at the Yalta Conference and was announced by the White House on February 12, 1945. The anxiety of the Soviet Government was abated since the agreement did not provide for an individual choice between political asylum and repatriation but made the return obligatory upon all persons who were Soviet citizens as of September 1, 1939.[50]

661 As soon as the Soviet Government achieved control over the territories occupied by the Red Army, Stalin revealed his true plans with regard to the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union. He accused some nationalities of being unworthy of the "privileges" given them

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48 The real meaning of the Soviet promises, alliances and retreats was clearly explained by Stalin in his article on "Strategy and Tactics," 1924. He wrote: "The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as a means wherewith to link legal work with illegal work, in order to use it as a screen behind which his illegal activities in the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie may be intensified. This is what the revolutionary utilization of reforms and agreements in an imperialist environment means." J. V. Stalin, *Sotchineniya*, Vol. VI (Moscow, 1947), p. 166.

49 According to various information from behind the iron curtain, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is still operating in small detachments especially in the Carpathian mountains.

50 *Department of State Bulletin*, "Repatriation of U. S. and Soviet Citizens" (Washington, 1945), Vol. 14, p. 443.

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661 by the Soviet regime and, as a result, made them collectively responsible for the delayed defeat of the German Army. This condemnation brought about the liquidation of several Soviet nationalities such as the Chechen-Ingush, the Kalmyks, the Crimean Tartars and the Germans of the Volga.[51] With regard to the larger nationalities, like the Ukrainians, the Byelo-Russians, the Caucasians, who also proved to be unreliable during the crisis of 1941-43, Stalin had chosen the policy of total Russification, beginning with wholesale purges and persecutions, especially among the intelligentsia.[52]

661 814 The decision, however, of the Soviet Government to return to the old policy of Russification was met by strong opposition. Ukrainian history, for example, was based (up to 1934 and again during the Second World War) on Hrushevskyj's works. It was, therefore, inconvenient even for the Russian Bolsheviks who were assured of Stalin's support to suddenly reject this interpretation of history since it had previous official approval by the Communists. Facing this situation, Soviet Russian historians were compelled to invent evidence that Hrushevskyj was not a scientist-historian, but a "bourgeois nationalist" who deliberately falsified actual facts in order to prove the differences between the Russian and Ukrainian nations.

One of the striking illustrations of Soviet-Russian difficulties in dealing with Ukrainian history and literature was offered by Litvin in *Bolshevik* (official Party periodical, in an article entitled, "About the History of the Ukrainian People"). In this article, Litvin admitted that the presentation of Ukrainian history and literature had up to this time been based on serious errors and deviations from the Soviet principle. These errors were promoted by the "enemies of the people" who had not yet been liquidated by the Party. He uncovered these deviations and errors in practically all the Soviet-Ukrainian histories used in schools and universities over a period of twenty-five years, and accused most of the Soviet-Ukrainian historians of having

51 P. E. Mosely, "Soviet Policy and Nationality Conflicts in East Central Europe," *The Soviet Union, a Symposium*, W. Gurian, ed. (Notre Dame, 1951), p. 68.

52 Stalin's decision to return to the Tsarist policy of Russification should be considered as a severe blow to all non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union, especially if one recalls his statement of what such promotion of Russian chauvinism would mean: "Every attempt to deviate toward great Russian chauvinism is an endeavor to ignore national differences of language, culture and mode of life; an endeavor to prepare the way for the liquidation of the national republics and regions; an endeavor to undermine the principle of national equality." Stalin's report at the XVI. Sjezd Wsesojuznoii Communisticheskoji Partiyi (B), (June 26-July 13, 1930) cf. *Sotchineniya*, Vol. XII (Moscow, 1949), p. 362.

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served the anti-Soviet cause. The most inexcusable "crime" of these Soviet-Ukrainian writers was their failure to show that Great Russian literature played a significant role in developing Ukrainian culture. Litvin declared: 661 814

> The uncovery of serious shortcomings and mistakes in various publications of the Academy of Science of Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic by the Central Committees of All-Union Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Ukraine, as well as in many publications of the other Ukrainian publishing houses proved that the known group of historians and litterateurs in Ukraine are not sufficiently armed with the Marxist-Leninist materialistic methods and remain in the prison of bourgeois nationalistic methodology of Hrushevskyj. . . . Bourgeois historian Hrushevskyj developed a fallacious anti-historical conception of the origin and development of the Ukrainian people, as if the Ukrainian people had no relationship with the Russian people, as if the entire historical development of both nations had not proceeded in a genuine friendship, unity and mutual influence, but in a constant antagonism.[53]

In order to discourage Soviet historians from referring in the future to the works of Hrushevskyj, Litvin emphasized that Hrushevskyj had been in constant touch with the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, which directed anti-Soviet uprisings in the territories of the Soviet Ukraine long after the establishment of the Soviet order. Finally, after giving advice on how to write an "acceptable" history of the Ukraine, Litvin concluded that the "Ukrainian" people must wait for scientific works from Soviet historians, who will be able to present concrete proof of the "brotherly" union between the Russian and Ukrainian people and their common loyalty to the Bolsheviks.

Simultaneously with Litvin's accusations, the co-workers of Soviet-Ukrainian journals, newspapers and propaganda were advised to adjust themselves to the new Party line by denouncing and purging the "remnants" of the Ukrainian National elements from Soviet-Ukrainian literature. They were further advised to praise the Soviet order as an achievement of the Great Russian people, who, therefore, must be recognized as the leaders of all nations on the road to Communism. 661

The climax of the anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian course was

53 Litvin, "About the History of the Ukrainian People," *Bolshevik*, No. 7 (Moscow, 1947), pp. 44-45.

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reached in the summer of 1951. On June 15, a ten-day festival, in which most of the Soviet-Ukrainian writers and poets participated, of Ukrainian art and literature was opened in Moscow. For some reason Stalin did not send his traditional greeting to the festival. But he attended the first performance of the opera, "Bohdan Khmelnitzkyj," the libretto of which was written by a well-known Soviet-Ukrainian writer, A. Korneichuk and his wife, Wanda Wasilevska. The following morning, the Soviet official newspaper, *Pravda,* condemned the libretto and accused its authors of "departure from historical truth."

On July 2, *Pravda* published an article which excited much attention in the Soviet Union and abroad. A war-time patriotic and popular poem by the Ukrainian poet, Wolodymyr Sosyura, entitled "Love the Ukraine" (written and repeatedly published in 1944 with the approval of the Soviet officials and reprinted in the Leningrad literary magazine, *Zvezda,* in May, 1951) gave *Pravda* an opportunity to unleash a blast at the ideological defections of Ukrainian writers and artists:

> . . . It is true, in his poem the poet calls for love of the Ukraine. The question arises: *Which* Ukraine is in question, of *which* Ukraine is Sosyura singing? Is he singing of that Ukraine which groaned for centuries under the exploiters' yoke and whose sorrow and bitterness poured out in Taras Shevchenko's angry lines? Or does Sosyura's poem refer to the new, prosperous Soviet Ukraine, created by the will of our people, led by the party of Bolsheviks? It is sufficient to examine Sosyura's poem to remove any doubt that, contrary to the true facts, he is singing of some primordial Ukraine, the Ukraine "in general." . . . Out of time, out of historical epoch—this is the Ukraine in the poet's portrayal.[54]

Following this attack, a series of meetings, at which serious ideological errors were found to exist, were initiated in July and August throughout the Ukraine. Having "proved" that the poem was "bourgeois-nationalistic," *Pravda* accused the editors of Russian journals which published the poem, the Ukrainian Press, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Ukraine of having failed to recognize and to combat the dangerous deviationist tendencies of Ukrainian writers.

In his open letter to the editors of *Pravda,* dated July 10, Sosyura

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54 "Against Ideological Distortions in Literature," Editorial, *Pravda,* July 2, 1951, p. 2.

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661 abjectly recanted his "unfortunate" errors. In a weird way, possible only under the pressure of Bolshevik terror, Sosyura wrote that he profoundly grasped the fact that the Soviet Ukraine cannot be conceived as separate from the mighty growth of the Soviet multi-national state, and that the Ukraine, after all, owed its present happiness to the fraternal assistance of the great Russian people. "Thanks to the leadership of our Party and of the deeply beloved leader of our peoples, Comrade Stalin, has the Ukraine become what it is," concluded Sosyura.[55]

On July 13, *Pravda* published a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine in which it was admitted that the deficiencies and errors were a result of laxity of the Central Committee in directing ideological-educational work. The Communist Party of the Ukraine pledged itself to take as quickly as possible drastic measures to eliminate serious existing deficiencies and errors in ideological works. It would educate by every means "the intelligentsia and the whole Ukrainian people . . . in the spirit of devotion to the party of Lenin and Stalin." [56]

Many more articles appeared and continued to appear in the Soviet press and journals on the distortion of ideology in Ukrainian literature and arts. The real reason for these accusations were clearly described in *Pravda Ukrainy*, July 15, in an article by the Soviet Ukrainian literary critic, Leonid Novichenko. He wrote:

> (Sosyura) . . . represents the Ukraine as standing alone, without connection with the great Russian people and other peoples of the Soviet Union. . . . The author refuses to see that in the battle to free the Ukraine, the sons of all the peoples of the Soviet Union and, in the first instance, the sons of Great Russia, took part; about them, he rudely and insultingly keeps quiet. . . . Sosyura, while praising a certain "exclusiveness" of the Ukrainian language, considered it possible not even to mention the Russian language, which is to every Ukrainian as much a native language as is Ukrainian itself.

The search for the shortcomings and mistakes in Ukrainian culture was intensified. On July 22, *Pravda Ukrainy* finally discovered that in the Ukraine,

> Too few lectures are being given on the economic and cultural construction of our country, about the eternal friendship of the Russian

55 Sosyura's letter to the editors of Pravda, *Pravda*, July 10, 1941, p. 4.
56 *Pravda*, July 13, 1951.

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661 and the Ukrainian peoples and about the struggle against the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

That the Soviet leaders were compelled to refer to bourgeois nationalism and cosmopolitanism as dangerous phenomena after thirty-one years of occupation of the Ukraine, is concrete proof of the Communist failure to destroy the will of its people to live in liberty. Under the pressure of "public" opinion aroused by *Pravda*, the sixth plenary session of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers of Ukraine was summoned at Kiev on July 30-31. Writers and poets from all over the Ukraine foregathered to discuss the "crisis" of Ukrainian literature. At this session, Sosyura was allowed to read to the assembly his new poem, "Ukraine," especially prepared for this occasion in order to demonstrate how much benefit he had derived from *Pravda's* "just" criticism.

Simultaneously with the anti-Ukrainian campaign, the Soviet officials discovered "nationalist" deviations in Armenia, Azerbaidzan, Turkestan, Byelo-Russia, Estonia, and in the Uzbek and Kazakhs Soviet Republics. The total mobilization of all party workers for the struggle against the dangerous internal "enemies" of the Soviet Russian people was once again underway. As in the past, the accusations of deviationism from the Party line would result in wholesale persecutions and purges of thousands of individuals found "guilty" of this "crime" by the Soviet regime. Such tactics, however, have resulted only in the weakening of the Bolshevik regime since they have driven millions of people into a silent passive opposition hardly to be destroyed.

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000 Thus history speaks clearly and unmistakably: the Ukraine, with its vast rich soil shelters people whose past demonstrates their yearning not to expand or to rule others, but to be their own masters on their own territories. Their tireless and fearless effort to establish an independent state and to gain their freedom certainly deserves consideration in any plans with regard to Eastern Europe. Freedom is worth fighting for; and it is freedom and equality not for the select few nations, but freedom for all, that will solidify all the peoples who, with God's help, shall one day celebrate a victory over freedom's conqueror—Bolshevism.